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ABSTRACT

Since student teaching has been redefined as a study of teaching, its concept and scope have been broadened to encompass a continuous exploration and examination of educational possibilities in various settings and under varying conditions. Such a concept of student teaching cannot be developed in the traditional setting of the public school student-teaching program. Only by combining theory with practice throughout the entire educational program can meaning be given to the student teaching experience. Apprenticeship has been strongly recommended as the key to successful teacher education. The training of teachers has been affected by the vast array of technological innovations which enable the teacher educator to simulate classroom and professional situations preparatory for the student's clinical or field experience. Attitude modification has been found to be effective in preparing future teachers to work with culturally disadvantaged groups. An innovation gaining momentum is the student teaching program which is based on competencies to be developed by individuals rather than fitting all individuals to pre-set expectations. In line with this, a number of states have moved toward the direction of certification based upon approved competency-based professional programs. (LL)

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INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS IN STUDENT TEACHING

Session: IMPROVING THE STUDENT TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Friday, May 3, 1974
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INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS IN STUDENT TEACHING

by
Mary B. Hess, Ed.D.

As the concept of student teaching is changing from the one-shot terminal classroom experience to that of a varied and ongoing series of professional experiences, a need for a new order in student teaching has been heralded.

TRADITIONAL STUDENT TEACHING

A look at the traditional view of student teaching placement and supervision is strikingly similar to the old farmer who planted his crop, and confident that the environmental conditions would provide healthy growth, only checked his crops occasionally. At the harvest season, if the crops were bountiful and successful, this of course was attributed to his own good judgment. A poor crop, on the other hand, was the fault of the environmental factors over which the farmer had no control. The most influencial environmental variable in the student teaching experience is the cooperating teacher. Reflecting back on your own beginning experiences in the classroom, unless you were of the modern school, you probably followed the same pattern of teaching as that of your exemplary model, your cooperating teacher. The profound influence of the cooperating teacher on the attitudes, beliefs, and practices of the student teacher has been evidenced empirically as well as by research.(10,11)This kind of crop in student teaching has resulted in what Lloyd Kline has called a pedagogical continuity across the generations of teachers. (8)

After almost a century and a half of professional preparation of teachers in this country, in which many innovations have been introduced, four basic limitations remain in many of today's student teaching programs. L. O. Andrews of Ohio State University has listed these as the rationale for a new direction in student teaching. (1) They are:

1. Student teaching is educationally unsound. It does not prepare competent teachers for the challenges of tomorrow.
2. Student teaching is psychologically unsound because of the emotional and academic pressures on the student.
3. Student teaching is operationally unsound where separate and independent factions, the public school system, the college and the state, each have interrelated responsibilities.
4. Student teaching is financially unsound unless adequate support is provided cooperatively by all three factions involved.

INNOVATIONS IN STUDENT TEACHING

Among the recommendations of the Baltimore Conference on Student Teaching was the proposal to update the terminology associated with student teaching. In his opening address, Edelfelt challenged the profession to update not only the obsolete terms but also the obsolete concept of student teaching. (4) Collier has identified the new concept of student teaching as becoming students of teaching. (3) To become a scholar of teaching, the student should be ensured an ever-expanding sequence of experiences with varying degrees of involvement and responsibility.

Since student teaching has been redefined as a study of teaching, its concept and scope have been broadened to encompass a continuous exploration and examination of educational possibilities in various

settings and under varying conditions. Such a concept of student teaching cannot be developed in the traditional setting of the public school student-teaching program.

While numerous approaches to the improvement of student teaching have been made, a common denominator in most innovative programs is the designed sequence of direct field experiences interrelated with present-day research and theory. No longer can undergraduate students spend seven semesters in lecture and theory classes, spend one semester under the tutelage of a cooperating teacher, and expect to be adequately prepared for the challenges of the modern classroom. Only by combining theory with practice throughout the entire educational program can meaning be given to the student teaching experience. Apprenticeship has been strongly recommended as the key to successful teacher education. But apprenticeship needs to be wide and varied to provide a sufficiently broad exposure to the student teacher.

From the beginning of his professional preparation, every student of teaching needs opportunities to explore, search, experiment, to develop self-awareness as well as professional competencies. A broad rang of field experiences is necessary to provide such opportunities.

The question is asked, to what extent are the recommendations and proposals of the profession for the improvement of student teaching being met? A research of the fifty State Departments of Education revealed a wide variety of innovative student teaching practices. (5) The principal areas of emphasis found in current innovations include individually or in combination, the following: 1. logistics, 2. earlier and broader field experiences replacing the traditional one-shot terminal student

teaching assignment, 3. technology, 4. attitude modification, 5. competency-based clinical or field experiences, and 6. new directions in certification.

Logistics. The most common concern of a logistical nature centers around what is considered an equitable organizational structure, which would adequately provide for greater numbers of student teachers.

In 1967, the Joint Committee on State Responsibility proposed an education professional development program that called for joint collaboration of the state department, the teacher education institutions, and the public school systems. The statewide organizational structure for student teaching proposed by the Joint Committee is structured around a state advisory board on teacher education and a state commission on student teaching. New types of extrainstitutions have been proposed: institutions between the universities and the schools; between the state board of higher education and the state department of public instruction. Such student-teaching or teacher education centers collaborate the work of all persons involved. A composite structure of this type has the advantage of placing the responsibility for specific policy making and execution at the local level where universities and schools can jointly develop appropriate student-teaching programs for local situations. The centers are staffed by a team of university and public school personnel within a framework developed by a statewide advisory commission. The organizational structure includes a joint steering committee, an instructional planning committee, and a general faculty for instruction and supervision of student teaching. Figure 1. shows a

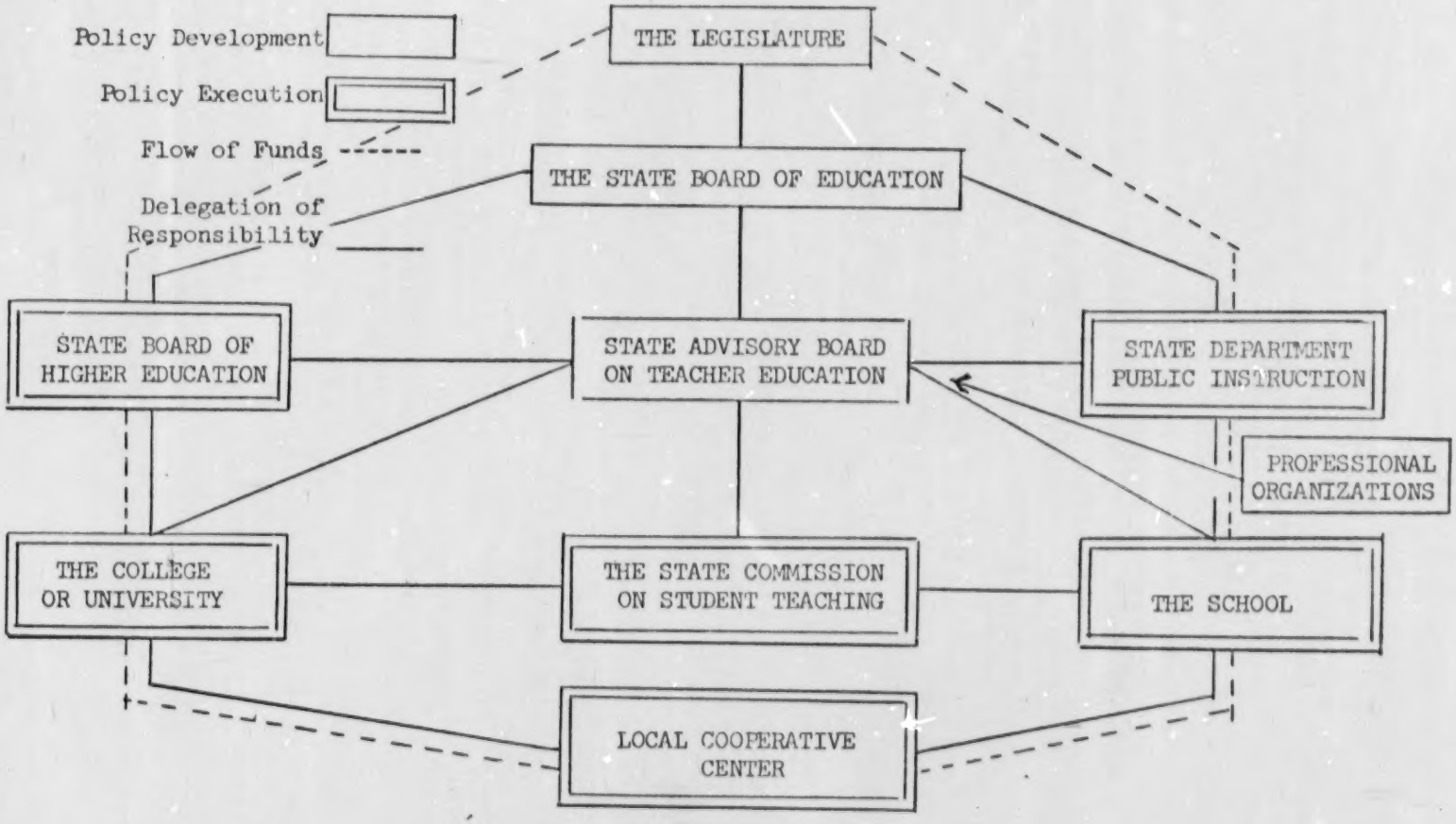

FIGURE 1

PROPOSED STATEWIDE COLLABORATIVE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF A STATE DEPARTMENT, HIGHER EDUCATION AND LOCAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR STUDENT TEACHING CENTERS AND STUDENT TEACHING

composite organizational chart, which collaborates all of the organizations and agencies involved in student teaching.

In his address delivered at the 1971 Annual Convention of the International Reading Association, Dr. Paul H. Masoner spoke on the premise that a national policy on teacher education must be established.(9) Such a recommendation is in view of the fact that the responsibility for teacher education today is vested in more than one thousand higher education institutions, fifty state government agencies, hundreds of public and private cooperating local school districts, and a number of regional and national accrediting agencies and professional organizations--all operating relatively independent of one another. Such joint organizational structures as have been described above endorse the need for partnership and team effort to effectively provide for the necessary clinical experiences.

Clinical Experiences. The problem of transfer of learning from theory to practice has been a major concern in the traditional teacher education program. In the innovative programs which have provided earlier and broader field experiences, theory is combined with practice throughout the student's training. Beginning in the freshman year, the student is exposed to limited classroom experiences, such as tutoring, directed observation, microteaching, or working with community crafts and recreation groups.

Beginning experiences with young people provide opportunities for problem solving, help establish relationships with different age groups and provide opportunity for skill development through immediate feedback.

Experience in a scaled-down teaching encounter may be used to develop flexibility, self-confidence and sensitivity.

Settings for clinical experiences include a variety of laboratory and field situations. It is important that the student be exposed to several different situations and a variety of personnel in order to determine the various adaptations of the teacher's role. As stated previously, one often teaches the way he was taught. An exposure to a number of clinical professors then will develop greater flexibility and adaptability in teaching situations.

Every student of teaching requires a broad range of clinical experiences, but every student does not require the same experiences in the same sequence and for the same length of time. The most critical component of a clinical or field oriented program is the availability of a wide range of possible activities within each phase of the program, and specific focus of each in relation to the total program of teacher preparation and the needs of the individual student.

Technology. Within the realm of teacher education has been introduced a vast array of technological innovations. It is modern technology which enables the teacher educator to simulate classroom and professional situations preparatory for the student's clinical or field experience.

The video-tape recorder has been found to be the most common technological innovation in teacher education. Such recordings are used principally for microteaching feedback, self-evaluation of skill development, peer analysis of microteaching, and guidance by a clinical professor. In addition, video-tape recordings can provide playbacks of real classroom situations and teaching strategies for either group or individual

study. Video-tape recordings of simulated problem situations provide for the case study or critical incident type of problem solving, planned and directed by the clinical professor. For records of a student's progress, sequential video-tape recordings provide a before and after comparison of the student's performance.

Another common technological innovation in the clinical aspects of teacher education is the use of the audio-tape recorder, used either as a suppliment to, or in place of video-tape where the latter is unavailable. Like the video-tape, audio-tape recordings can provide oral aspects of a classroom situation, teacher-pupil interaction, or case problems to be studied individually or for group analysis.

Dial-access systems is gradually gaining recognition as a primary part of the college library or learning resource center. This is a system for retrieving information stored on audio or video-tape in a central library by dialing specified code numbers from telephones wired into the system. Such systems provide greater magnitude of use of video and audio recorded materials. For the clinical phase of the teacher education program, a library of audio and video-tapes should be built covering all aspects of learning theory and teaching strategies.

The tele-lecture system is a method of communication providing amplified telephone conversations from any point in the nation or world to a classroom or learning center, where a phone jack is installed for plugging into the control console. The tele-lecture provides live conferences between the college classroom and a distant authority, or specialist in a particular field, at a comparatively low cost in contrast to a personal

appearance. Tele-lectures can be enhanced by accompanying slides or other visual media of the guest speaker and topic of his lecture.

No longer considered innovative, but nevertheless an important segment of the technology in the clinical phase of teacher education, is the motion picture film. Locally or commercially produced, the motion picture film can provide case situations of teaching problems and critical incidents for discussion and analysis with the clinical professor. Filmed simulated classroom situations can provide for action and problem solving by the education student. Filmed demonstrations of strategies for handling specific situations and functions of the classroom teacher helps to prepare the clinical student for his classroom experience. Single-concept films demonstrate a single teaching function, principal or strategy for in-depth study by the student.

Both open circuit and closed circuit television have become a standard part of nearly every college. In addition to the obvious uses of television in the college curriculum, live television provides observation of teachers, pupils, and teacher-pupil interaction from real, ongoing classrooms. With guided discussion and analysis by an experienced clinical professor, such observation provides deeper insight for the clinical student.

Attitude Modification. A limited use of techniques for effecting attitudinal changes in students of teaching has been observed. To prepare teachers for inner-city schools, a combination of clinical experiences in the inner-city school has produced modification in attitude. Sensitivity training has been found to be effective in working with the culturally

disadvantaged groups. The greatest avenue for attitude modification is the self-esteem or self-awareness workshop. The continuing seminar, which provides a nonthreatening supporting situation, gives the student opportunity to develop self-insight and self-acceptance.

Competency-Based Programs. An innovation gaining momentum is the student teaching program, which is based on competencies to be developed by individuals rather than fitting all individuals to pre-set expectations. A clinical program based upon clearly stated behavioral objectives and organized in terms of performance modules provides the means for maximum flexibility and individuality. Emphasis upon individuality does not permit the student to make indiscriminate choices or allow complete control of his own program. This type of individualization, rather, provides clinical experiences on an individual basis, for demonstration of proficiency, and evidence of professional and personal maturity. Options in a competency-based program are pursued according to the experiencial background, needs and interests of the student, as well as the specialty or career goals he is pursuing.

New Directions In Certification. Certification as a teacher has traditionally been based upon a person's college training, his degree, and the specified hours of professional courses in education including classroom experience or student teaching. Until 1968, no state had established performance standards requiring a classroom teacher to demonstrate his teaching competence.

With the introduction of the concept of performance criteria by the Washington State Board of Education, a totally new direction of certification was introduced. From that beginning, a number of states have

moved toward the direction of certification based upon approved competency-based professional programs.

In addition to the concept of performance criteria for certification, a number of states have introduced levels of certification based upon competency and role of the professional person. A "preparatory" certificate authorizes preparatory experiences with young people in a school setting. The "initial" certificate authorizes professional school services as a staff intern who is competent to assume independent responsibility. The "continuing" certificate authorizes those who qualify for roles which contribute to professional preparation and improvement of instruction.

As the foregoing innovations in student teaching have suggested, the educational profession is no longer accepting as adequate the traditional views and concepts of student teaching. As individuals, each person involved in professional preparation of teachers has the power to lead his students through enriching professional experiences. But where there is power to lead, there is also power to mis-lead; and the power to mislead is the power to destroy. Upon the shoulders of today's teachers of teachers rests the future of tomorrow's students.

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